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STATE FOR IO/UNP BHARRIS AND WHA/PPC RYONEOKA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UN](#) [UNSC](#) [GT](#) [VE](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: SWEDEN: DEMARCHE ON DEFEATING VENEZUELA IN THE
2006 ELECTION FOR A SEAT ON THE UNSC

REF: STATE 20173

Classified By: Charge Stephen V. Noble, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (c) Polcouns delivered 2/8 reftel demarche in support of Guatemala's candidacy for the Latin American non-permanent seat on the UNSC to MFA Americas Director Hakan Malmquist. On 2/10, the Charge delivered the demarche by telcon to MFA Political Director Olof Skoog. Without saying how the GoS may come out on the issue, Skoog did volunteer that the GoS thought Venezuela demonstrated a "clear sense of irresponsibility" in their recent actions at the IAEA in Vienna. Skoog added further that the GOS was "disappointed but not surprised" by the Venezuelan performance in Vienna. Skoog looked forward to continuing our dialog on this issue. Malmquist said both the Venezuelan and the Guatemalan embassies had already approached the MFA regarding the election. Sweden had not yet decided which candidacy to support. The recommendation from the MFA on which country to back would be based in part on the performance of the aspirants in the ensuing months. Malmquist said Sweden was following closely developments in Venezuela, as well as Bolivia and other countries where "populists" had been elected, and would evaluate how -- and if -- their actions moderated in relation to their rhetoric. This would influence Sweden's decision on the Latin American candidacy.

¶2. (c) Malmquist said the EU-Latin America summit would take place May 9-10 in Vienna, and he expected there would be extensive lobbying by both Venezuela and Guatemala. At the same time, the Austrian hosts had already expressed concern about the possibility of disruptive behavior by Chavez, including speculation about the possible offering of alternative gatherings at the summit.

¶3. (c) Malmquist said Sweden had a long history with Guatemala, has a large Embassy there and a large assistance program, and had been directly involved in the UN-brokered peace negotiations. At the same time, it also had a history with Venezuela. Sweden closed its Embassy there "ten years ago," and was sensitive to Venezuela's trans-border problems with Colombia, where MFA Political Director Skoog was recently Ambassador with regional responsibilities.

¶4. (c) Another factor that could come into play, Malmquist said, was Sweden's parliamentary elections that will take place September 17. A new government could take a different view on which country to support.

¶5. (c) Olof Skoog, MFA Political Director on 2/10 told the Charge that that in Sweden's view Venezuela had acted with a clear sense of irresponsibility in the recent action at the IAEA in Vienna -- vis-a-vis the Iranian nuclear situation. Skoog said the GoS was disappointed but not surprised by

Venezuela's approach. Skoog could not say where the GoS would come out on the issue, but he shared our growing concern and skepticism about Venezuelan actions.

16. (c) Comment: It was clear from the remarks about what Chavez may do at the May summit that the Europeans are aware of his potential as a spoiler in international fora. Presumably, his behavior at this event will be one of the benchmarks the Swedes will use in evaluating Venezuela as a candidate for the UNSC. Malmquist also appeared to be signaling that the current Social Democrat government would be more likely to support Venezuela -- especially if it is on good behavior between now and that election -- than would a government led by the center/right current opposition, who are now leading in the polls.

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